



Writer/Producer Dean Fisher determined to turn his Hitchcock Award short-listed

script into a 35mm short movie with high production values and a Hollywood look – for a mere \$37,000 – and spent three months of fourteen-hour days doggedly achieving his objective.

He bagged a celebrity cast (including Nick Moran of **Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels** and Craig Charles of **Red Dwarf**), an award-winning crew, secured discounts on everything from equipment hire to editing facilities, including sound mixing at Pinewood Studios, and searched for free locations. "I was very fortunate that the industry has a great attitude toward short film production," remarks Fisher modestly.

His success with **Ten Minutes**, a black comedy about the nightmarish predicaments faced by Andy, an ambitious young man tasked to look after his father's top magazine, is noteworthy. Launched at BAFTA and Cannes, it competed at eighteen UK, European and US film festivals, won the Best Original Screenplay and Best Original Music Score at WestFest in Texas and was short-listed at many others. The unique educational resource that completes the DVD package provides essential guidance to new filmmakers, cinematography students and film enthusiasts and includes the making of **Ten Minutes** from concept to distribution, interviews with crewmembers, cast and suppliers and a selection of practical downloadable features such as festival lists and an A to Z of film terminology.

Fisher, who set up Scanner-Rhodes Productions to develop and produce feature films and documentaries for cinema release, has a number of films to his credit including **Whoosh**, on which he collaborated with Student Oscar-nominated Director of Photography Melissa Byers (**Inferno**), a National Film & Television School graduate whose cinematographic studies were partly funded by Kodak. Byers, who is currently completing work as a lighting camerawoman on Tim Burton's new animated feature, relished the "highly focused" challenge of visualising **Ten Minutes** with its numerous locations.

"Although the film takes place at night, Director Ben Mole was clear about not wanting lots of blue moonlight," states Byers who used an ARRI 535 and an ARRI geared head. "He felt the film should have a warm, bright glamorous feel to reflect the characters' lifestyles, so we used lots of practicals as background highlights which meant we could fill large areas of space without the need for expensive bulky lamps." Mole also suggested setting the film at Christmastime, adding production value to the exteriors with festoons and fairy lights. "Kodak Vision Expression 500T 5284 produced bright crisp highlights from the practicals and dug deeply into the shadows without the need for much

The TEN MINUTES Wonder

fill light, an approach that worked particularly well in a bridge night scene where we placed a festoon of bulbs. All we needed were extra hands to fit the 200 bulbs into lamp holders!" muses Byers. "As the film progresses and pressure mounts on Andy, we added filters to increase the warmth and accentuated the claustrophobic feel with lighting, shots and editing. A cooler scene by a printing press lit by daylight fluorescents didn't give us any flicker problems, provided we stayed within certain frame speeds," she comments. "It meant half our work was already done; we just supplemented the lighting with several daylight balanced Kino Flos as well as harder light sources for separation."

Fisher was overwhelmed with the finished result, conceding that "Melissa gives a good depth to scenes and is very creative with her lighting." On a feminist note, Byers studied cinematography in a class of six, four of whom were women, but she admits she is "still surprised when crews of both sexes mention how nice it is to be working with a camerawoman. There are times when you are aware you are in the minority, but this can also bring advantages. Ultimately, your work will speak for itself," she says encouragingly to aspiring camerawomen.

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Ten Minutes and The Film Makers Guide are available from www.filmakersguide.co.uk ■

Above left: DP Melissa Byers hard at work, all other shots members of the cast of *Ten Minutes*.

PHOTOS BY: MARK CLAYTON

